



From January 2025 (Volume 183)

more than 250 plants installed alongside new seating areas carved from oak trees



Cabinet member Sabri Ozaydin helps plant up the 'pocket park' in Southgate (credit Enfield Council)

A new 'pocket park' has been installed in Southgate.

The space beside Southgate Station has been transformed from an area of plain grass to a space with extra seating – carved from tree logs – and more than 250 plants.



As I write this in early January 2025 there are incredibly devastating wild fires in California. A very dry period left trees and undergrowth tinder dry and this was followed by very strong winds. It was like an accident waiting to happen and tens of thousands of people have been impacted by evacuation orders since the blazes began, but still ten people died (so far) and whole neighborhoods were reduced to total ash-covered scenes of such a magnitude that firefighters and residents could do nothing to prevent the spread. Residents are also contending with polluted air and other hazardous conditions. As many as 10,000 structures have been destroyed between the coastal Palisades Fire, which is now the most destructive ever to hit Los Angeles County



Trump is due to become president shortly and major world reactions are already seen:

Denmark struggles to stay calm in crisis as Trump threatens to take Greenland

Israeli settlers in The West Bank see Trump win as chance to go further

The Panama Canal is threatened to be seized by Trump

Climate change is, as always, disputed, but I feel that so much evidence is available that it should be impossible to ignore. The reasons may be disputed but man is obviously causing major changes just by the sheer increase of numbers. I look at Carbon balancing by big companies and cannot believe that anyone believes this total rubbish. They continue to pollute and say they are offsetting financially. Really???

Locally our previous police station (ironically) was sold and the developers put in an application planning permission for a hostel (they called it a hotel). It was woefully short of living space, communal areas etc and planning permission was rejected. The developers, however, ignored this and continued developing it, advertising rental accommodation. To cap it all other boroughs sent homeless here without checking whether it had a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) license, which is a legal requirement for landlords who own or manage properties that are occupied by multiple households. Our council, bless them, are now having interdepartmental discussions to sort this out. Meanwhile vulnerable people are living in unsafe accommodation.

Local cafes are frequented by an all-male clientele from one ethnic group and local women are expressing difficulties when passing them sitting outside on the pavement where they experience lewd remarks made to them and their children. I have taken this up with the police of several occasions now and again at a meeting with the police last night I am assured, once again that they are obtaining 'info' and it is being dealt with police 'above local pay grades'. Having had a restaurant locally I am only too aware that a café full continuously of 'customers' just drinking coffee is not financially viable and these numerous cafes are a front for various criminal activities such as money laundering and drugs etc. Call me paranoid but time will tell and I will remind you that I wrote it here first.

I am continuously bring this up at public meetings and am already recognized as being outspoken, but I really feel strongly about these local issues and rather than just making token noises like so many other do, I personally try to make a change locally but antisocial behavior is now so much worse everywhere that it is like swimming against the tide. I am told "you are wasting your time". I disagree.

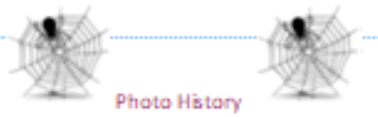
Anyway this page seems so very black that I will end on a positive note that our park looks wonderful even in its frost-covered mantle and we always see so many walkers and runners, with and without dogs.

Family are so lovely and we are planning Lynn's 'low key' lunch at West Lodge Hotel, so long as they come up with a veggie selection that is acceptable.

Life goes on and really despite my moans, Lynn and I laugh a lot and we seem to be still very active and enjoy all our social life with our many friends.

Guess I'm just an old grouch

Jan 2025



Just a thought...

THINKING



A thought struck me at my usual contemplative time..in bed, and trying to read

"Give up reading and get down your thoughts or you'll never finish the book"

When Lynn and I are having an adventure and feeling proud of ourselves, having achieved (in our minds) a really arduous long days walk maybe, or thrilled at finding a place abroad after much planning at home. Taking local trains to actually succeed in locating these hidden locations

But life bought a reality check to our memories when we so often heard about walkers in foreign lands who backpack alone for long periods in totally rugged and inhospitable areas.

Then we hear of travelers who take trains in dangerous war-torn lands.

We sometimes hear of these accounts and maybe feel a little deflated and our pride on our accomplishments seems to be diminished. Perhaps our achievements were not so great after all.

Today, however, Lynn and I talked about satisfaction.

This must not in any way be confused with complacency, because it is all about appreciating what one has right at one's fingertips.

We were sitting in a bench in our local park, in the cold and enjoying a sunny January spell.



The lake view was wonderful and Lynn pointed out the shape of the branches of the trees that would normally have been hidden behind their canopy of leaves.

Trees that were always there but now suddenly demanded our attention. The backdrop of the grey clouds were given a magic luminescence from the sly sun.

Hundreds of birds were distantly seen at the water's edge in the area where families gather on hot sunny days Maybe the birds were hoping for a bread treat.



People passed us with dogs wrapped in winter coats and the weather seemed to demand their owners to greet us with nods and radiant smiles.

All these wonderful things right on our doorstep.

This is an illustration, probably a bad one, but to me it shows how one seems to constantly look further afield to satisfy the desire to find that elusive meal to rave about, when all the ingredients for that meal are right there on the table in front of us ready to be enjoyed.

We seem to have instilled in us from an early age that desire to make money, to achieve a higher position at work, to marry well, to have a bigger car, better house, homes abroad, more extravagant holidays ..you get my meaning.

Of course one needs ambition but wouldn't it be a great goal in life simply to achieve satisfaction with what one actually has. Not necessarily material possessions but a deeper more fulfilling satisfaction.

It seems there is no recognised part of life where someone stands in front of us, holds up their hand and says "stop, wait, slow down, look around you"

There should be a time in all our lives when we can stop and take stock.

To learn to recognise what great family and friends we have, to appreciate what a lovely life we have had and are still enjoyin

To learn to recognise what great family and friends we have, to appreciate what a lovely life we have had and are still enjoying and what unfulfilled plans we have still to carry out.

This does not need to be when one is old...just the fact that one is thinking about it makes that the right time

It does not in any way mean one should be self satisfied, smug, or lose that desire to improve.

It should just be a pause, to take stock, and to appreciate.

I liken it to many remote villages we walked through in Nepal. In 2019



This was not posed...it was just a totally natural greeting as we passed by

No modern conveniences but I remember the shouts of delight with primitive swings being enjoyed by children.

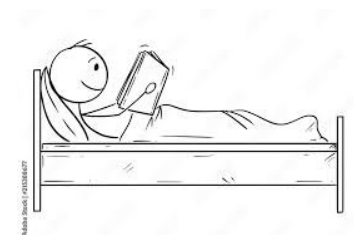
The villagers had very little compared to people in our own home countries, but they all smiled, they all greeted us happily and one felt that they appreciated their life however hard it was.

Maybe I'm being an idealist but Lynn and I really now try to practice what I have written here.

We do appreciate the happiness we both have had and are continuing to have.

Before you say it, I must stress that this is, if course, tempered by sadness along the way... but doesn't the sour make the sweet even sweeter.

Anyway, it's off my chest and maybe I can now continue reading my book.





Jan 2025





The Grandad + Larnie Menu


Ingredients:


 1tbsp hugs


 3cups french toast making


 2tsp photo book creator

 1 pinch Snuggling in the study

 2½ fun memory maker

 0.5g video call catch ups

 3ml laughs together

 1 best friend


 1 I love you



Photo History



F₄ R₁ O₁ M₃
L₁ A₁ R₁ N₁ I₁ E₁



Peachy still holding her Santa hat



The wonderful gift from Tammy...a family collage ..now on my study wall



Dad's medals



A memorial tin I have kept for many years

many readers of this journal, I have a wealth of wartime memories from the issue of gas masks at Highfield Road School in the summer of 1939 and Mr Chamberlain's announcement in those sonorous tones that we were now at war with Germany, to the joyous celebrations of V.E. Day and V.J. Day and 8th May and

BETTER POT-LUCK



with
Churchill
today

THAN HUMBLE PIE

under
Hitler
tomorrow



DON'T WASTE FOOD!

15th August, 1945 respectively.

In between there was the blitz, the doodlebugs, the constant visits to the air raid shelters on the sports fields at Southgate County School in Fox Lane





Photo History



Smiling Faces



Lynn with Vera



Tammy and her love... 'Hot Chocolate'



Larnie, the Churro Kid



Lynn and myself on a sunny and chilly winter's walk



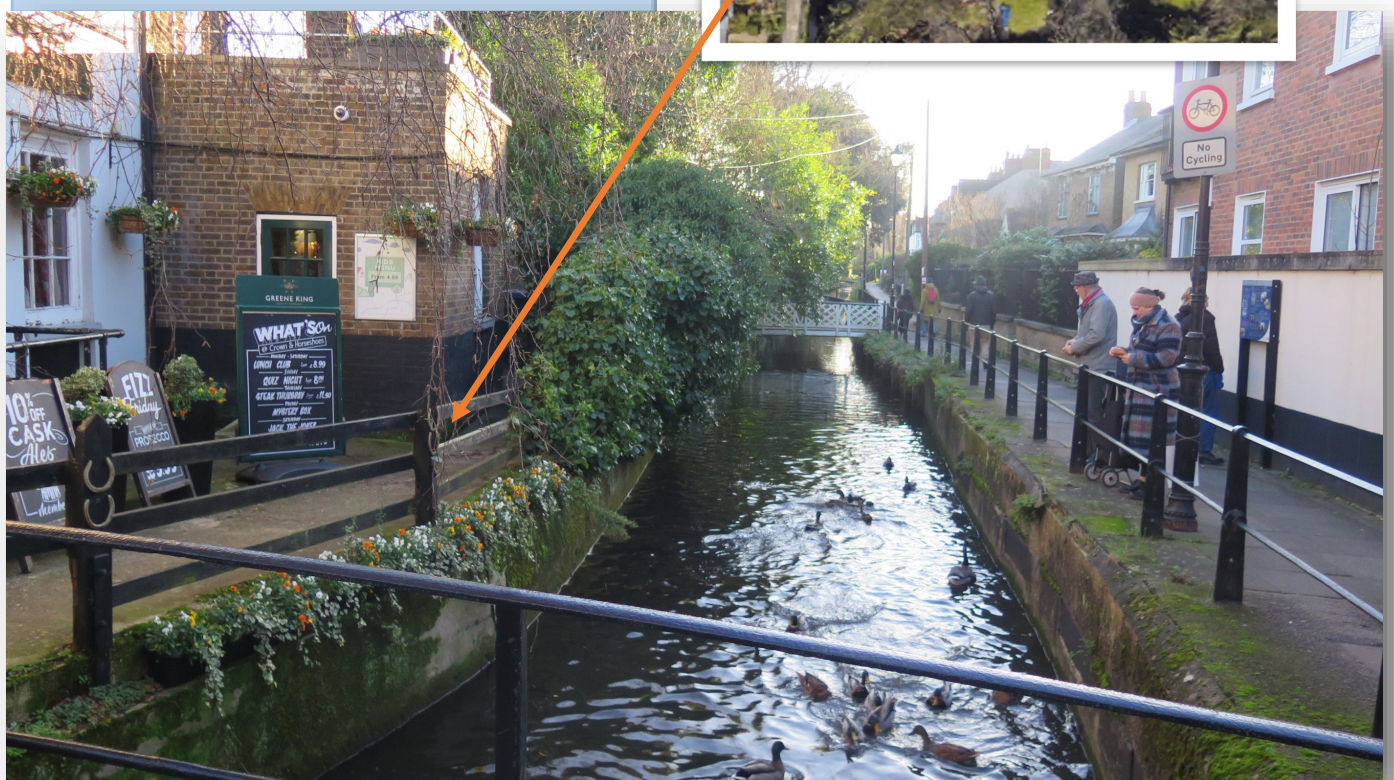
Larnie and Tammy in January 2025







It is so thought-provoking to walk in Enfield where Gentleman's Row and the surrounding area has remarkably been preserved in the center of the modern town. Resorting to Google Maps it gives us an aerial perspective showing large hidden gardens etc





This large fascinating house has a large rear garden and it's front garden slopes down to The New River

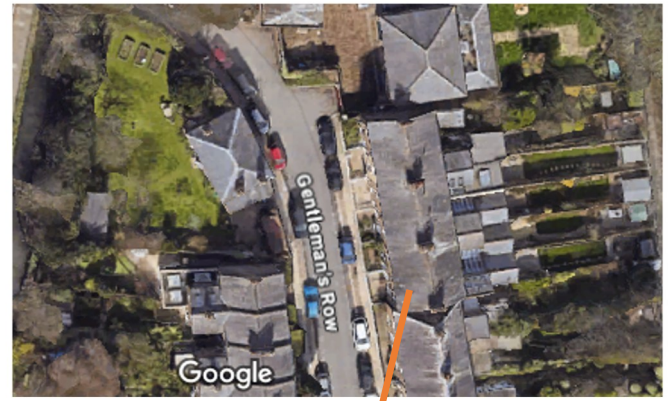




Photo History



This quiet street of small houses is part of Gentleman's Row with its larger houses at the far end and it is a shame to spoil the mood with modern cars





I know it seems a bit voyeuristic but I guess we all love to see the hidden gardens etc, so no apologies





Unprecedented wild fires in California and today 2 weeks after they started they are still ongoing. The Palisades Fire and Eaton Fire continue to burn, although containment efforts have made some progress. The Palisades Fire is currently 59% contained, while the Eaton

Fire is 87% contained. However, dangerous conditions persist, and tens of thousands of people remain under evacuation orders. It's a challenging situation, and firefighters are working tirelessly to bring the fires under control.

On my birthday, January 15th a day before Trump returned to the White House a peace was brokered in Gaza but voices from both sides make me really wonder if it can last. So much hatred on both sides and as I already prophesised, generations are growing up with hatred instilled in their whole lives.

Trump seems intent on making far-sweeping changes world-wide and he seems to have the backing to carry them out. I actually loathe the guy and cringe when I see him ..the world's most powerful man and he comes across as a total idiot. Yet, and I say this having thought about this a lot, what the world needs is positive action and the ability to carry it out. This is fine when one agrees with his actions but if one disagrees it is too bad and that is so worrying. Billionaires now are getting involved in world politics and again, they are probably not qualified to have a say in how we live. Too much power rests with too few people. A fraction of their wealth put to organized, supervised good use could effectively end famine and change whole countries for ever. Wouldn't that be a fantastic legacy to leave behind

Sorry, I realise that my views are not why you are reading these books, so apologies

I love this happy shot







Whitewebbs Park is under threat from a proposed (partial) sell of to Tottenham Hotspurs Training Ground. The former golf course has become a favourite destination for walkers and dog walkers. This is January 2025





Photo History



Bob &,Sandra



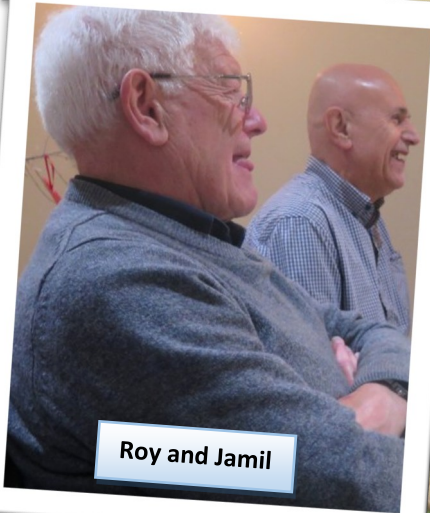
Peter & Ruth



Des



Roy and Jamil



Chris



January '2025 ...Every month several 'early morning' swimmers meet for coffee and cakes* at Redford's (Crews Hill)
(* Des enjoyed his toasted sandwich)

Michael & Roy



Michael



Me



Sue







Photo History



Terry



Derek



Jose

An informal evening at Jose and Cristina's was a fun evening of conversation, laughter, great company and delicious food



Ralph

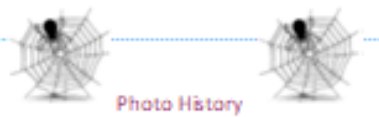


Cristina



Lynn





The Cycle Of Life

Probably at the age I am now makes it possible, even predictable, to think of ones inevitable short life expectancy.

No, not being morbid, just being realistic.

Who wants to reach an old age and be reliant on others to provide basic living standards

I, obviously can not speak for others, would like to depart this world retaining my reasoning and be dignified in old age .

Yes, I think 81 is a good age and I am fit, still able to think clearly and hopefully still able, unaided, to string a sentence together.

Guess you will have to be the judge of that.



This brings me to my topic: the cycle of life.

This is the last cycle. One is granted a life of indeterminate length and I am grateful that we are not yet able to predict when we will eventually 'depart this world'

See, even I am avoiding the word 'die'. Yet it happens to all of us all so why the reluctance to discuss death.

OK, that's the elephant in the room and I've pushed it back into the jungle .

Corny metaphor, sorry.

The last cycle, for me anyway, is split into two sections...'taking stock' and 'tidying up'.

Having had a long working life, I take stock of 'what if'.



Don't we all do that ?

What if I had invested carefully, studied harder etc etc.

Who knows? The only way realistically is that I made decisions, right or wrong ones, but at the time they were made they must have seemed right I guess .Taking stock to me, is looking back and seeing how they shaped my path from then on and more importantly is to sit back and see the positive effects those decisions were from the long term perspective...hindsight.

I have learnt that relationships are of paramount importance and how blessed I have been to go through a long and very varied life with so many relationships that I can deem wonderful..not just in the past but also currently. Be they with friends, work colleagues, family and just acquaintances.

Some are only transitory like the smiling greeting from local shopkeepers, neighbours etc but all gel to make life so wonderful.

Yes, of course I must have made enemies but I honestly can't think of any that stand out.

Admittedly, I don't like some people and obviously some people don't like me..that's chemistry but my attitude now is..if they don't like me that's their problem, not mine and I won't change just to ingratiate myself with them.

Those days are long past and truthfully if one has to put on an act to be liked , the person they like is not the real you.

Sorry, does all this sound heavy?

I now have so many friends in all different working hard precluded the time to develop

Taking stock is to me, a happy and productive

I don't intend to vegetate , that would be a



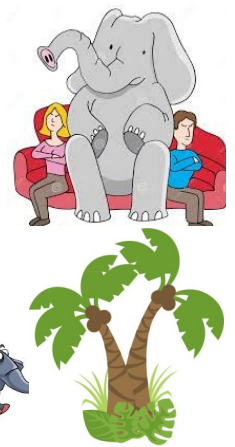
parts of my life, far more than in earlier cycles of life. Maybe the friendships and relationships that I now love and cherish.

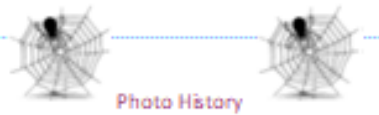
time which is afforded by retirement.

waste of time which is something I abhor.

Being productive is making the most of my remaining time and I am so thankful that I have the good health to still be productive.

Many contemporaries are not so blessed which makes me really appreciate that.





I could go on developing that theme but my second part is: 'tidying up'...

Over many years one accumulates so much 'baggage' and this is not a metaphor. I really have accumulated so much "ephemera", keepsakes, mementos, nostalgic bits and pieces, things we are really loathe to part with..yes, the original word was probably correct... 'baggage'.



Tidying up is what must now be considered.

Why?... for several reasons.

Once I die, why should family have to sort through a load of 'personal keepsakes' and be put in the awkward predicament of what to keep, and what to bin .

The second reason is realistically, why am I keeping it anyway?

Is it comfortable to be surrounded by things that remind me of the past?

Nothing's more boring than an old guy talking about the past.

Or is it that being surrounded by so many endearing mementos one honestly doesn't know where to start in clearing it out.

That's probably closer to the truth.

Yes, to be honest, I guess I have become a hoarder. What a frightening confession.



Those TV programmes where the presenter has to make passages through piles of yellowing hoarded newspapers that smell of cats wee to find the old man in a stained cardigan sitting on a dirty sagging armchair in the corner of the room

Is that what I've become??

Who really wants all those old theatre programmes, heavy brass door handles, useless old CD installation discs from out of date computer programmes.

Throw them all out.

Don't do the two man bin bag exercise that we do.

One says "useless, why did I keep this?" , drops it in the bin bag and the other one says "wow, this is fantastic, no way can we throw this out " and promptly removes it from the bag.

Two rules for clearing out:

- (1) Do it alone
- (2) Be ruthless

The chances are you didn't even remember you had said item and secondly, you'll never miss it.

Anyway that's my thought process put down in print.

"Don't you dare to bin these valuable thoughts"

RMK..Jan '25





Wow...15 'Lads' turned up for our monthly walk. I could really be in trouble for calling us 'lads' as the photos will show. We met at Herron Quays in Docklands and walked in the grey drizzle partly along the Thames Path ending at Limehouse. Our chosen lunch stop

must have been delighted to see 15 customers appear from an empty street to swell their clientele up to 19 cvts. It was great to see many friends again and after my foot operation I was delighted to be able to walk the route.

Meeting in the station. Greetings over, the next question was "how's your ankle / prostate/ nose / flu / leg (delete at appropriate)"





Yes, it was grey and wet but there's always so much to see on our walks



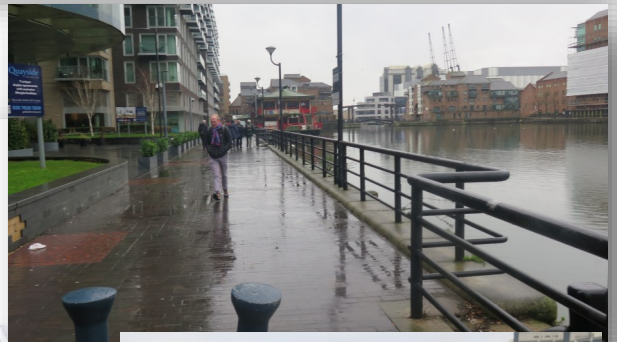


Gentlemen's Walking Group - Isle of Dogs to Limehouse via Mudchute Farm



Distance
7.82 km

Steps
14,260









The Space theatre in the Isle of Dogs





He couldn't accept that his reflection wasn't a competitor

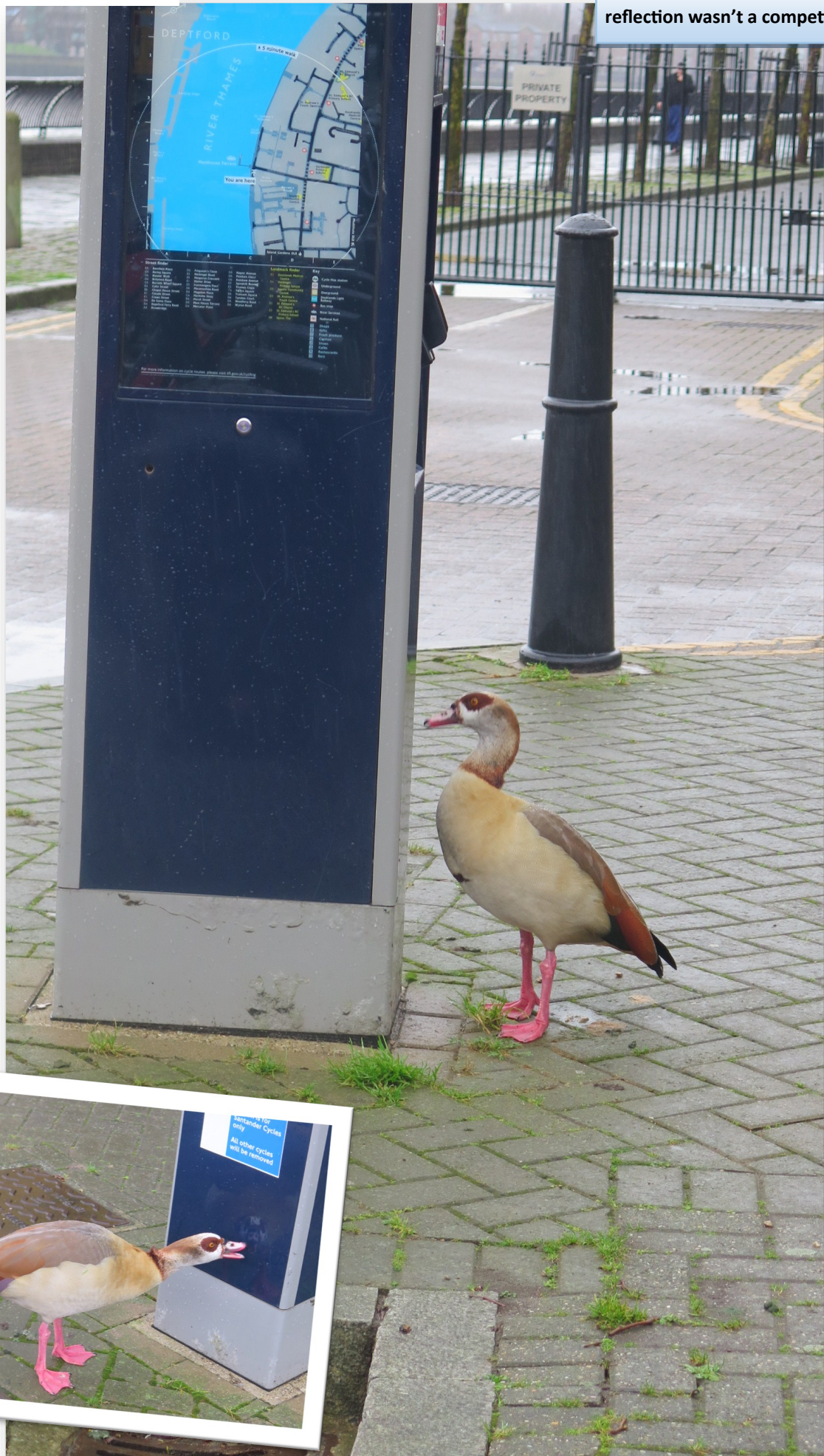
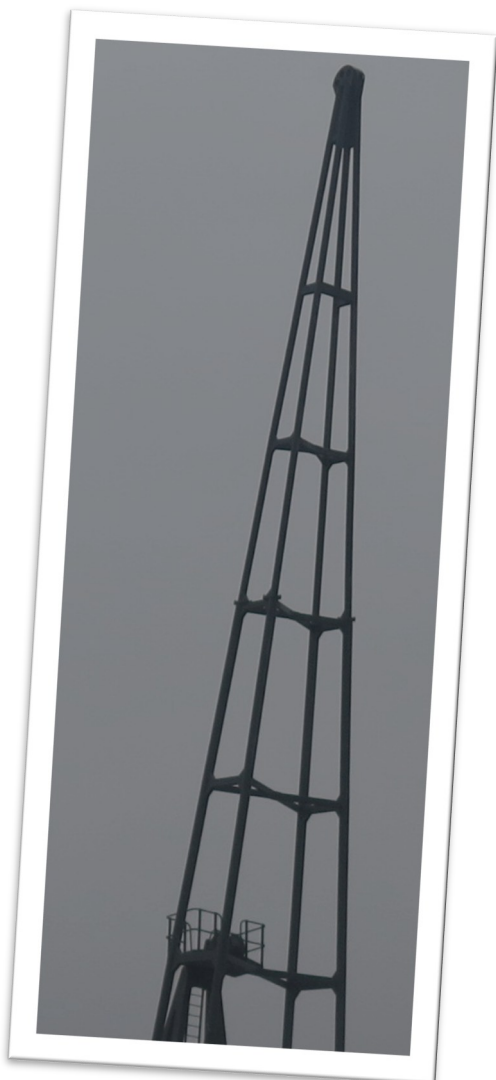




Photo History



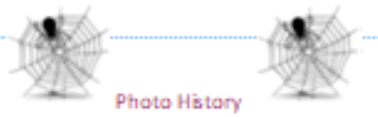


Photo History

This large residential development made me think about people who purchased apartments with a Thames view ended up with new attached apartments totally obscuring any views



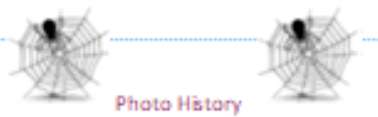
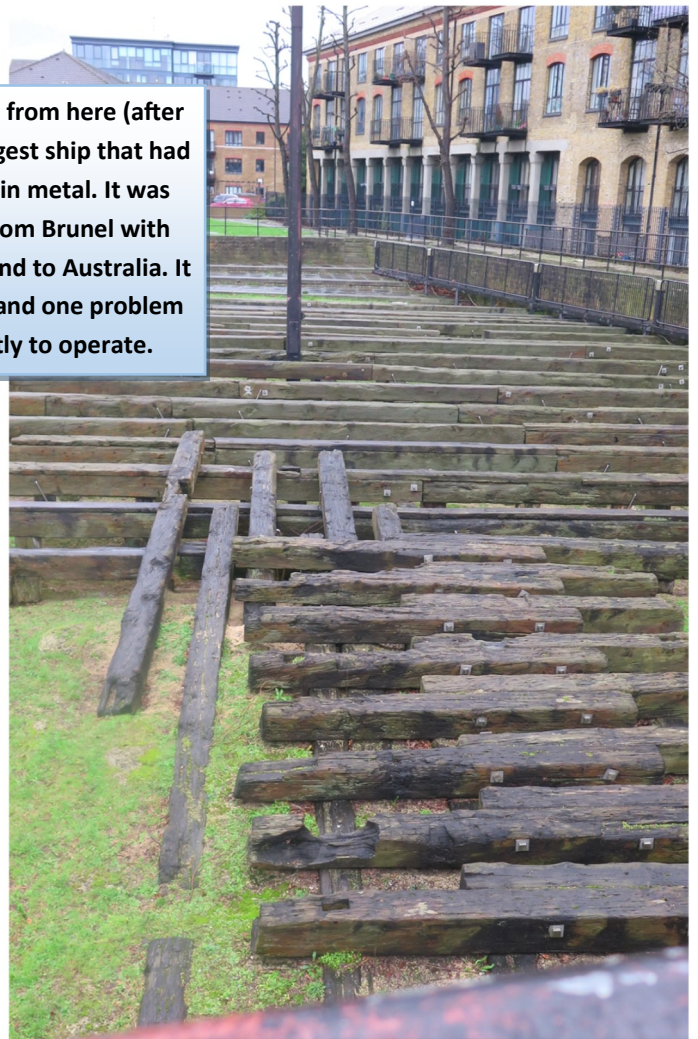


Photo History

According to this info board, the Great Eastern was launched from here (after 13 unsuccessful attempts) This was in 1857 and it was the largest ship that had ever been built and also almost completely constructed all in metal. It was eventually launched sideways. Designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel with passengers and cargo, it had enough fuel to travel from England to Australia. It had a chequered career and ended up as a cable-laying ship and one problem was that it was too large for many docks and also too costly to operate.



The Great Eastern

A walk through the history of the Isle of Dogs

The largest ship of its time

From this spot, between November and December 1857, 13 separate unsuccessful attempts were made to launch the SS Great Eastern, at the time the largest ship that had ever been built.

The Great Eastern was an iron sailing steamship designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel, and built by J. Scott Russell & Co. at Millwall Iron Works. It was built to carry both passengers and cargo between England and Australia and carried enough fuel to make the journey without stopping.

Work began on the Great Eastern in the spring of 1854 and was completed by November 1857. 2,000 men and boys built the ship, sometimes working at night by gaslight. Three million rivets were used to hold the iron plates of the hull together. The total cost of building the ship was £920,000, a fortune at the time and over one hundred million pounds in modern-day currency.



Building the 'Great Leviathan': The Great Eastern under construction, sitting on 112 stacks at Millwall. The partially completed ship is on the left of the picture, parallel to the river into which she was launched sideways, an innovation for a major vessel. © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London.



The attempted launch of the Great Eastern. Image courtesy of Frontpiece Ltd www.imagearttopography.com

The Great Eastern was the first ship to be constructed almost entirely of metal and remained unmatched in size and strength for 40 years.

Finally launched

The huge vessel was finally launched sideways into the Thames in January 1858, to much celebration in the press. By September 1859 it was fitted out and ready for sea. The wooden piles and cross-pieces exposed on the bank here are thought to be the remains of the launching site of the ship.

However, the Great Eastern was not the success that either Brunel or the project's investors had hoped for. Damaged by an explosion on her maiden voyage, the ship was repaired but was not economical to operate and was too big for many docks. It plied her trade as an Atlantic passenger liner between the UK and USA rather than on the longer routes as had been intended.

In 1866 the Great Eastern was converted to use for cable laying and laid the first transatlantic telegraph cable. It then spent eleven years rusting in Milford Haven, Wales and ended her life as a floating billboard for a department store in Liverpool, before being broken up on the Mersey in 1899.

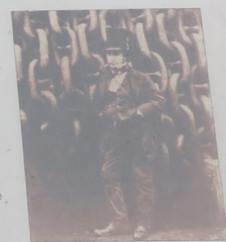
Experimental in design, with a double hull and powered by sail, steam engines and paddle wheels, the ship was intended to carry 12,000 tons of coal and travel at a steady speed of 14 knots. It had capacity for 800 first class passengers and 3,000 in second class. The

Isambard Kingdom Brunel

Although of French descent, Isambard Kingdom Brunel (1806-1859) is considered a giant of British engineering and one of the most important figures of the industrial revolution. He built dockyards, the Great Western Railway, several important bridges and a series of steamships.

The Great Eastern was the third of his shipbuilding projects. The first was a wooden paddle steamer called the Great Western. It was the first steamship to make regular crossings of the Atlantic Ocean. The second was the Great Britain, the first large iron steamship and the first big ship to use a screw propeller.

Brunel's innovative designs revolutionised public transport and modern engineering.

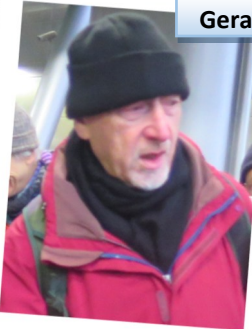


I K Brunel by the launching chains of the Great Eastern, November 1857. Photo by Robert Hewett, courtesy of the Institute of Civil Engineers.



Uncovering the slipway in 1984. The timbers had to be sprayed with water to stop them drying out until they could be impregnated with preservative. Photo © Mike Sedcombe, www.1850sphotos.org.uk

Photo History



Gerald



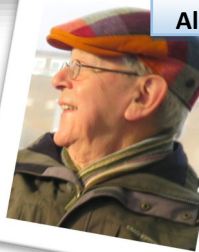
Stephen



Colin



Alan



Alan



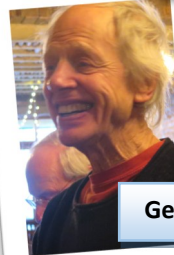
Dan



Stuart



Cyril



Gerry



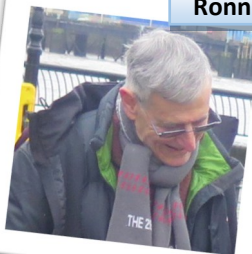
Norman



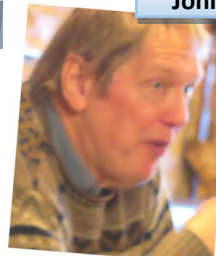
Ralph



Neil



Ronnie



John



Paul





February 2025.....as always, a very eclectic volume... hard to believe that I've now done 183 Photo History Volumes.

